

# The Renzi Report

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Your Direct Link to the News and Events from our Nation's Capital and Rural Arizona

## Dear Fellow Arizonan:

In this edition of the Renzi Report, I have included important information regarding efforts to secure additional firefighting aircraft for rural Arizona. This month, we also introduced three new pieces of legislation, including a bill that would remove Arizona from the Ninth Circuit Court.

As always, feel free to tell your family members, friends and neighbors about the Renzi Report. You can view previous editions of the Report or sign up to receive this email at my website, <http://www.house.gov/renzi/newsletter.html>.

If you have any questions or comments about this e-newsletter or anything else taking place in Congress and our nation, please e-mail me at [rick.renzi@mail.house.gov](mailto:rick.renzi@mail.house.gov). I will get back to you as quickly as possible. You can find additional information about developments in Congress on my website at <http://www.house.gov/renzi>.

I hope you find this Renzi Report informative. Thank you and may God bless America.

Congressman Rick Renzi

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## Renzi Receives Congressional Leadership Award from Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees



During a ceremony in his Washington office, Congressman Renzi was presented with the Stephen Wolensky Congressional Leadership Award from LTG Billy Thomas (US Army, Retired), Chairman of the Uniformed Services Disabled Retirees Organization.

Renzi received the award for his determined efforts to insure that disabled retirees receive their earned retired pay in full.

After presenting Renzi with the award, LTG Thomas said, "Your efforts were successful in restoring retired pay for uniformed service disabled retirees. You are a true advocate for our nation's disabled military retirees, and deserving of this honorable recognition."

In October of 2003, Renzi brokered an agreement between House Leadership and members of the "Honor Guard 20," to provide the concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability pay to military retirees for the first time in history.

To learn more about the Uniformed Service Disabled Retirees Organization, visit their website at:

[www.usdr.org](http://www.usdr.org)

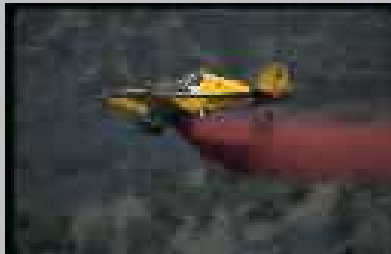
## Below is a breakdown of the new forward deployed aircraft and helicopters:

2 C-130 Hercules Tankers –  
Williams Gateway Airport



2 Single Engine Air Tankers –  
Prescott

2 Single Engine Air Tankers –  
Winslow



1 Type II Medium Lift Helicopter –  
Heber

1 Type I Heavy Lift Helicopter –  
Show Low



1 Type I Heavy Lift Helicopter –  
Prescott

1 Type II Medium Lift Helicopter –  
Roosevelt

## Help is on the way...New Firefighting Assets Secured for Rural Arizona

Recent actions taken by the Forest Service to ground 33 heavy air tankers used for fire fighting came as unwelcome news to rural Arizona. The timing of this decision could not have been worse as our state faces the early onset of a potentially dangerous fire season. My primary concern following the loss of two air tankers based in rural Arizona was how to quickly obtain replacement airframes without sacrificing capability, capacity or safety.

Immediate lines of communication were opened between my office and federal agency officials. Critical negotiations took place that gave Arizona priority attention above other areas in the country given our early fire season. Within thirty-six hours of initial contact, new aircraft were in route to sites across Arizona. These cooperative efforts resulted in a replacement package including four single engine air tankers, two type II helicopters, two type I heavy-lift helicopters and two military C-130 Hercules tankers.

The increased capability and improved safety of these new airframes are a welcome addition to our firefighting resources in rural Arizona. These air assets will be forward deployed, capable of initial attack fire suppression efforts, and will provide our firefighters with an improved quick response capability. More importantly, the replacement package gives our firefighters the capacity to deliver more total gallons of water and slurry to fires than possible with previous aircraft. These new airframes have been put to quick use in successfully managing recent fires outside of Payson and McNary.

Operating costs incurred by the purchase of new contracts for aircraft and helicopters should not be deducted from existing fire suppression and land management budget allocations. These accounts need to remain untouched in order to assure the effectiveness of vital fuels reduction projects. To cover the expenses, supplemental appropriations must be made by Congress. This additional funding will allow all critical fire prevention and suppression programs to continue uninterrupted through next winter.

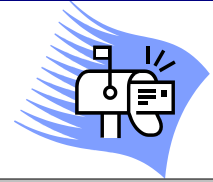
Further legislative efforts are underway to reform the procedures that led to the grounding of the heavy air tanker fleet. My colleagues and I have initiated discussions with officials from the FAA to allow airworthy tankers to remain operational for the current fire season. My proposal, based upon the Canadian model, would provide for **individual** safety inspections of all tanker aircraft. Currently, the evaluation that led to the grounding of the entire tanker fleet was based upon inspections of a small number of older aircraft. This approach is flawed, resulting in the grounding of several well-maintained, flight-safe aircraft. The impending reform of this system will allow for additional aircraft to remain on the front lines and help Arizona businesses and operators to remain in service, fighting fires for years into the future.

Working hard to ensure that every resource is available to Arizona is an essential priority of mine. Through a combined approach that involves off-season hazardous fuels reduction projects, the participation of our recovering timber industry and coordination with officials from state and federal agencies, we can work to simultaneously preserve and protect our forests while creating new jobs for Arizonans and additional sources of revenue in our rural economies.

Today, Arizona stands in a stronger, safer position to fight fires and protect our rural communities. Improved cooperation and communication is key to the success of these efforts, there is no room for finger-pointing and political rhetoric. Inaction and empty solutions leave our communities vulnerable. Gambling with the health of our forests for political gain is an unwise bet, where margins measured in lives and property are too costly to comprehend. As a result of immediate action and inter-agency cooperation - as a team - we will begin the upcoming fire season with an increased aircraft and helicopter capability, and I will continue to work in Congress to further bolster our firefighting efforts for years to come.

# Congressional Mailbag

## Answers to Your Questions on Important Issues



Congressman Renzi,

I am a current Medicare beneficiary who pays too much for my prescription drug medication. What does the new Medicare plan passed by Congress do to reduce the cost of my prescription drugs?

Page, Arizona

Thank you for writing to me regarding this important issue. For too long, Americans have been unduly burdened with high prescription drug costs. To address this pressing concern, the *Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003* (H.R. 1), passed the House on June 27, 2003 and was signed into law by President Bush. This new plan offers Medicare drug coverage to beneficiaries with monthly premiums of \$35 and deductibles of \$250-\$275. Above the deductible, Medicare would pay for 80 percent of drug costs until out-of-pocket amounts reach \$2000 and provide catastrophic coverage once out-of-pocket prescription costs exceed \$3700.

While the full plan is not yet available, beginning this month, Medicare is providing a temporary Prescription Drug Discount Card to seniors who need immediate relief from high drug costs. The drug card will assist millions of Americans by pooling their buying power. Medicare beneficiaries are expected to save an average of 10 to 15 percent off their overall drug spending, and up to 25 percent or more off the retail price of some individual drugs. To find out more about the Medicare Drug Discount Card, visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or call **1-800-MEDICARE**.

In addition to this legislation, I also voted for H.R. 2427, the Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003, which allows consumers, pharmacies, and wholesalers to import approved drugs from foreign countries. H.R. 2427 would finally give Americans the opportunity to purchase FDA-approved drugs at the same low cost as in Canada or other approved countries and save American consumers at least \$635 billion of their own money each year. This legislation passed the House on July 25, 2003, and similar legislation is currently being considered by the Senate.

I am a strong supporter of legislation that would give Arizona's seniors affordable access to prescription drugs. Seniors on fixed incomes should not be forced to choose between paying for their prescription drugs and covering costs for food or basic needs. Our Arizona seniors should not have to travel to Mexico to buy their medication. I will continue to work in Congress to guarantee all senior citizens the right-to-choose a voluntary prescription drug plan under Medicare.

Sincerely,

Congressman Rick Renzi

To write a letter to Congressman Renzi send your mail to 418 Cannon HOB, Washington D.C. 20515 or send your letter via email to [rick.renzi@mail.house.gov](mailto:rick.renzi@mail.house.gov)

## Renzi Bill Will Remove Arizona from Jurisdiction of Ninth Circuit Court

Congressman Renzi has introduced legislation that will remove Arizona from the jurisdiction of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. H.R. 4247, *The Ninth Circuit Judgeship and Reorganization Act of 2004*, will transform the current Ninth Circuit, the largest in the country, into three smaller circuits. One of those, the new Twelfth Circuit Court, will include Arizona, Nevada, Idaho and Montana. Senator John Ensign of Nevada has introduced similar legislation.

**For too long, Arizonans have been held hostage by activist judges out of San Francisco, who have consistently ruled against ranchers, farmers, miners and our timber industry. The Ninth Circuit Court is out of touch with the traditional western values that still hold true in our communities, and the scales of justice must be balanced.**

The Ninth Circuit's current jurisdiction encompasses nine states and almost 57 million people in the fastest growing region in the country. Explosive population growth in the Ninth Circuit has outpaced the court's ability to be effective and represent the majority opinion of the people. This situation has resulted in inconsistencies and unfairness in the judicial process.

**This Ninth Circuit Court has obstructed the removal of hazardous fuels from our forests, interfered in our ability to properly manage local grazing lands and ruled against the use of the phrase 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance. These contemptuous judgments tear at the moral fabric of our nation, disregard the will of the people and force a corrupt ideology upon our society.**

This legislation will leave California, Hawaii, Guam, and the Northern Marianas Islands under the jurisdiction of the Ninth Circuit and create a Twelfth Circuit Court encompassing Nevada, Arizona, Idaho and Montana, as well as a Thirteenth Circuit Court containing Alaska, Oregon and Washington. The proposed circuit map addresses current population trends and alleviates caseload overflow. By breaking up the courts into two additional circuits, our appellate court system will become more efficient in administering justice.

**The people of Arizona will be better served under the jurisdiction of a separate court, one that recognizes our family values and defends our core beliefs. Breaking up the Ninth Circuit will give Arizona a greater voice in the judicial process, allowing for improved administrative procedures and the equal application of justice.**

### From the Headlines...

#### Renzi: FAA going to look at each individual air tanker

KVOA TV 4 – NBC Tucson

<http://kvoa.com/Global/story.asp?S=1876729>

#### Renzi gets aerial firefighting help

#### Public figures criticize loss of air tankers

The Prescott Daily Courier

<http://www.communitypapers.com/DAILYCOURIER/viewsearchresults.asp?infoid=122655972&moduleid=18470706&current>

#### Renzi Secures \$500 Million in Additional Firefighting Funds

U.S. Newswires

<http://releases.usnewswire.com/GetRelease.asp?id=175-05192004>

#### Health bills reduces health care cost; improves small business insurance

The Eloy Enterprise

[http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=11756475&BRD=1817&PAG=461&dept\\_id=222077&rft=6](http://www.zwire.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=11756475&BRD=1817&PAG=461&dept_id=222077&rft=6)



**288,000 New Jobs Created Nationwide in April**  
***Over 1.1 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003***  
**Tax Relief for Small Businesses = New Jobs for Rural Arizonans**

- **New job figures released by the Department of Labor and other recent indicators show that America's economy is strong and getting stronger, and that recent tax cuts and small business incentive plans are working.**
- **In total, over 1.1 million jobs have been added since August 2003, with 8 consecutive months of gains. During this same time, the nation's unemployment rate dropped from 6.3 percent in June 2003 to 5.6 percent in April 2004, a level that is below the average unemployment rate for the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.**
- **In the past three quarters, economic growth has averaged 5.5 percent - the fastest rate in two decades.**
- **In Arizona: 6,300 new jobs were created in April, and 58,100 new jobs have been created since April of 2003.**

**District Office Contact Information**

As your Representative in Congress, I can help make the federal government more accessible and responsive to your needs. If you require assistance with a federal agency, my staff and I are here to help. We can also provide services such as ordering flags, arranging tours of Washington, D.C. and providing nominations to military academies. Feel free to contact your nearest office with any inquiries and requests about important issues.

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